

REMARKS

Entry of the foregoing and reconsideration of the subject application are respectfully requested in light of the amendments above and the comments which follow.

As correctly noted in the Office Action Summary, claims 2-8, 12, 14, 15, 17-20 and 22-25 are pending. By the present response, claims 15 and 17 have been amended and claim 14 canceled. Thus, upon entry of the present response, claims 2-8, 12, 15, 17-20 and 22-25 remain pending and await further consideration on the merits.

Support for the foregoing amendments can be found, for example, in at least the following locations in the original disclosure: the original claims.

Entry of the forgoing is appropriate pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.116 for at least the following reasons. First, the amendments address the grounds of rejection of claim 14 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), second paragraph, thereby reducing the number of issues present upon appeal. Second, the amendments raise no new issues that would necessitate further search and/or substantive reexamination. Third, the amendments clearly overcome the grounds of rejection by canceling the rejected independent claim and amending the remaining claims to depend from allowable independent claim 22.

CLAIM REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 14, 15 and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. WO 00/18583 to Trovinger et al. (hereafter "WO '583") in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,304,561 to Shingo (hereinafter "Shingo") and U.S.

Patent No. 4,053,150 to Lane (hereafter "Lane") on the grounds set forth in paragraph 1 of the Official Action.

First, claim 14 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer and reserving the right to file a continuation application directed that subject matter. Thus, the rejection of claim 14 is moot because claim 14 has been canceled.

Second, dependent claims 15 and 17 now depend from allowable claim 22. Therefore, the present rejection of these claims has been obviated.

For at least the reasons noted below, this rejection should be withdrawn.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

Applicants note with appreciation the indication that claims 2-8, 12, 18-20 and 22-25 are allowed as indicated in paragraph 2 of the Official Action. By this Amendment, dependent claims 15 and 17 now also depend from allowed claim 22 and are themselves allowable for at least the same reasons. Thus, all of remaining claims 2-8, 12, 15, 17-20 and 22-25 are in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

From the foregoing, further and favorable action in the form of a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner feel that any issues remain, it is requested that the undersigned be contacted so that any such issues may be adequately addressed and prosecution of the instant application expedited.

Respectfully submitted,

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